

**MINUTES OF MEETING
AVON CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION
Held Wednesday February 14, 2024**

AVON CITY HALL

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 10:30 A.M. by Peter Kratt, Chairman of the Civil Service Commission.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chairman Peter Kratt and Commissioners Alan Wojciechowski and Bill Greaney

In attendance: Police Chief Fischbach, Fire Chief Swope, Assistant Chief Brett Bruehler, Law Director John Gasior, and Safety Service Director Duane Streater
Recording, Secretary Diane Szlempa

Absent:

ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO AGENDA:

Mr. Kratt asked if there were any additions or deletions to today's agenda, there were none.

APPROVE MINUTES OF MEETING OF 1/17/2024:

Mr. Wojciechowski made a motion to approve the minutes from the meeting of 1/17/2024. Mr. Greaney seconded and the motion passed 3-0.

ACTION ITEM:

Certify Results of the Fire Assistant Chief Promotional Exam

Chief Swope stated that all the scores are in and tallied up. The 2 phases of the test, the written and the assessment center are in. The civil service secretary, Diane, looked at everything and tallied all the scores, added extra credit points where needed, and then weighted the scores. The 40% for written and 60% for the assessment as the test said. Then the accumulated total and everyone's ranking. That is what we are asking for you to approve today. Mr. Kratt asked Ms. Szlempa if there was anything more to add. She stated that this is exactly what happened. The results were doubled checked and made sure the results are officially correct once you sign them. Mr. Greaney asked if everyone made it to the exam as scheduled and was there any issue with it. Chief Swope stated 4 people gave us their intent and all of them made it and all of them passed. Chief was very happy with that.

Mr. Greaney mad a motion to certify the results of the Fire Assistant Chief Promotional Exam. Mr. Wojciechowski seconded and the motion passed 3-0.

Request to consider waiving of Rule VII, Section 5, for the Police Department to hire the next 2 applicants from the lateral list.

As Chief Fischbach has previously stated, over the past year about the lateral list process that we put into place March of last year when the rule was modified. His intent was for the rule to be followed what was put into the rule. For every 1 lateral hire we would hire 1 off the entry list. They have been doing that process over the last year. Since the new lateral system has been put into place, there has only been 2 hires off the list going back to March of last year and 1 of those hires has since resigned and gone back to their former agency. So, in the last year, we have only hired and maintained 1 off the lateral list. In the meantime, we have had 3 from the entry list. As you can see, we have been diligent and been trying to go back and forth from the entry level list and the lateral list as was intended. As we have said before, there is good value in both. Getting young recruits with no experience definitely has a value to the agency just as getting more senior officers that come from other departments does. The goal would be to have a blend from both lists. Today, we have 2 candidates that have successfully gone through the background process, gone through interviews with the command staff, and have been recommended to receive conditional offers of employment from the lateral list. Because of that, he is asking the commission to consider waiving that rule that we put that option in there do that, so if and when to the situation that we are at today we can move on 2 viable candidates from the lateral list without having to wait to hire someone from the entrance list. As you have seen from every meeting over the past year or two, the candidate pool is shrinking. It continues to shrink. The current entry list we have was certified in August 2023. We had a total of 52 candidates at that time when it was first certified. We are down to number 42 on that list in a little less than 6 months. We do not have a large pool of candidates and just the way timing is going with interviews and background checks and process and people removing themselves off the list or us removing them. We now have 2 viable candidates from the lateral and if we do not move timely on these candidates, We suspect there is a risk of them taking themselves off the list because they will get offers from other agencies. One of the candidates is on Westlake's list as well and going through the background process with them. Westlake is absolutely a competitor of ours when it comes to the candidates and potential officers. Asking for the rule to be waived which would allow the hiring 2 at the same time off the lateral list in consideration of the need to do this timely and expeditiously so we do not lose these viable candidates. Currently down 2 officers. These 2 hires would fill those positions. He anticipates that at least 2 if not 4 more officers leaving this year due to going to other agencies or retirement. We are down, this year is anticipated as being down. We need to stay on top of it so that it does not become a bigger hole. That's the need for this request. Currently the lateral list going back to March of last year, there have been 49 total applicants. Out of those 49, only 9 are ones we would consider. Some have removed themselves other the City has removed them from the process. The lateral list is currently sitting at 9 potential and the entry level list is down to 42 out of 52. That is the currently status of the applicants we have. Chief has spoken with Safety Service Director Streater, and he is aware of the need and the request as well as the Law Director. If you have additional questions for them, they could speak. Mr. Kratt has one question is where Law Director, Mr. Gasior, is satisfied that this can be done and if any problems are foreseen. Mr. Gasior stated that there is no problem doing this with the rule change that was made a few months back. He would like to add this should be limited in scope as to just this case. Any other cases after this one, the Chief would have to come back and request a waiver. Essentially, it would allow the hiring of the 2 applicants from the lateral list. Once they are hired, he has to go back to the test. Chief stated that this is correct and the ask. Not to waive it for any time period, but this specific instance for these 2 specific candidates that we have up in the process. The intention is that if we run into this again, Chief would come back and explain the situation so that the commission can make a decision on a case-by-case basis and not do a general

waiver or suspension of a time period. Mr. Greaney asked if this is the turn now to hire from the lateral list as opposed to it being turn for the entry list. Chief stated that this is the turn for the lateral list, and we have 2 now that have made it through the process and got to the point where we are willing to give them a conditional offer of employment. We do not have any viable candidates right now that have made it that far from off the entry list to even give them an offer. We have 2 immediate openings and have 2 candidates that have met what we would consider all of our criteria to get conditional offers. Mr. Greaney follows up with a question about when this happens, if it happens with the 2, then do you now go back to the now the other list? Chief said, yes, they are constantly working from both lists. They are doing their due diligence to try and have viable candidates ready to go in turn. Chief does not believe that we have any this meeting removed. Once a name is removed from the entry list by either them or us, that automatically moves the list on to the next person in line. If number for 42 is removed, we move onto the next person. That is what will be continued to do. Ms. Szlempa stated that this past month from the last meeting, 2 have been requested to be removed and we hired 1 from the entrance list. For the lateral list, there were 2 that requested to be removed, and did not take in any applications. Chief Fischbach acknowledged that last hire we had last week was off the entry list. We are going back and forth 1 for 1. The next hire could be from the lateral list. Mr. Kratt checked to see how soon the chief foresees the need for another entry level. Chief surmised that at the longest in August at the one-year mark. They will try to make it to August, they are only 6 months into it and are well past halfway going through the list. For sure we will be asking to start the process in June in anticipation of it being done in August, if not sooner. We will definitely not be asking for an extension on that because there won't be any candidates left on it.

Mr. Wojciechowski made a motion to approve to waive Rule VII, Section 5 for this particular case, Mr. Greaney seconded and the motion passed 3-0.

Any additional comments from the audience?

None

NEXT MEETING DATE:

Next meeting is set for Monday, March 4th, 2024, at 10:00 A.M.

ADJOURN:

Following a unanimous vote, today's meeting was adjourned at 10:41 A.M.

PASSED: _____ **SIGNED BY:** _____

Peter Kratt, Chairman

ATTEST: _____

Diane Szlempa, Recording Secretary

C: John Gasior
Safety Director Duane Streater
Chief Fischbach
Chief Swope
Diane Szlempa